

Lost on Mulholland Drive!

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The setting: A conversation overheard by an invisible "commentator" between two elderly but handsome men driving north on the Pacific Coast Highway on Monday afternoon, June 23, 2014.

Pilot (Mohs) to Navigator (Hansen): "Lee, shouldn't we be turning off on one of the roads to take us over this mountain range to Simi Valley?"

Navigator: "Probably but which one? These car rental maps they gave you. No very useful. They stop just a mile or two north of Malibu. They're worthless."

Pilot (after another mile or two): "I think we should try this turnoff."

Navigator: "Okay, but I'm not sure this looks like a heavily traveled road that would go over the mountain."

Pilot (after a few minutes): "Yup, you're right. This looks like nothing more than series of small real estate developments. We've got to turn around and go back."

Commentator listening to the conversation: "I wonder if those guys know what they are doing. This is the third dead-end turnoff they've made. Now they're back on the highway again, heading north."

Navigator: "Fred, turn here. This finally looks like a road that will take us over the top."

Pilot: "Yes, I think you are right."

Navigator (speaking after twenty 20 minutes of driving up and down and around the mountain sides): "Fred, it looks like we're coming to a junction. It's with Mulholland Drive!"

Pilot: "But which way do we go now? It looks as if we can go only to the right or the left."

Navigator: "I say—go to the right. Going to the left will take us back to LA. Let's go left."

Pilot: "Okay, let's hope we come to a crossroad that will take us down to Simi Valley."

Pilot (after another twenty minutes and more miles of curves and ups and downs): "Lee, do you see what I see? It looks like the ocean. We must be heading back to the Pacific Coast Highway. Yes, we are."

Navigator: "You're right Fred. That was a bum steer on my part. And we still have miles to go before we sleep (Robert Frost, right?)."

Rather than bore you with further detail, we finally did make it. But in the town of Oxnard we had to stop and ask several different people how to find the divided highway that got us out of town and headed to Simi Valley and our hotel.

As we reflected on our journey after a good nap and over a glass of wine in the hotel lobby, we wondered how those early settlers back in the 1850s made it across the plains, over the Rocky Mountains, through the desert, and then over the Sierra Nevada Mountains to their destinations in California. The two of us would probably never have made it. Either the roving black bears would have eaten us or we would have been scalped by the Indians intent on getting revenge against the White Men. Or given our good looks, the Indians might have married us off to beautiful young Indian maidens. With that, our offspring would now find themselves enrolled here under UW-Madison's preferential, holistic admissions policy. What a weird ending.

With best wishes.